

I CLAIM:

1 1. A method of confirming proper receipt of e-mail, said method
2 comprising the steps of:

3 obtaining an e-mail file which is intended by a sending
4 party for transmission to a target e-mail address associated
5 with a target party;

6 electronically transmitting the e-mail file from a
7 first computer connected to a communications network and
8 associated with the sending party;

9 delivering the e-mail file to a recipient e-mail
10 address which is associated with a second computer connected
11 to the communications network;

12 detecting a designated access event triggered by an
13 accessing party and generally associated with e-mail
14 retrieval from the recipient e-mail address;

15 upon a detection of the designated access event
16 automatically executing the steps of:

17 providing notice of the delivered e-mail file to
18 the accessing party,

19 discovering recipient data generally associated
20 with the recipient e-mail address,

21 generating a confirmation of receipt notice
22 containing the discovered recipient data, and

23 electronically transmitting the confirmation of
24 receipt notice from the second computer to a return e-
25 mail address associated with the sending party; and
26 comparing the discovered recipient data contained in
27 the confirmation of receipt notice with intended delivery
28 information associated with the target party, whereby the
29 sending party may determine whether the e-mail file was
30 properly delivered.

2. The method as in Claim 1,

 wherein the discovering step includes retrieving from
the second computer a pre-recorded recipient data file
containing pre-recorded recipient data.

3. The method as in Claim 1,

 further comprising the steps of: obtaining accessing
party identity information from the accessing party as a
requisite condition for permitting access to the recipient
e-mail address, and recording the accessing party identity
information to an accessing party data file for resident
storage in the second computer, and

 wherein the discovering step includes retrieving the
accessing party data file from the second computer, and the
step of comparing the discovered recipient data includes
determining whether the accessing party identity information

12 is equivalent to or different from the intended target
13 party, whereby the sending party may determine whether the
14 accessing party triggering the access event was in fact the
15 intended target party.

1 4. The method as in Claim 1,

2 further comprising the steps of: obtaining accessing
3 party identity information from the accessing party as a
4 requisite condition for operating a remote user computer,
5 said remote user computer connected to the second computer
6 via the communications network and operable by the accessing
7 party to gain remote access to the recipient e-mail address,
8 and recording the accessing party identity information to an
9 accessing party data file for resident storage in the remote
10 user computer, and

11 wherein the discovering step includes retrieving the
12 accessing party data file from the remote user computer, and
13 the step of comparing the discovered recipient data includes
14 determining whether the accessing party identity information
15 is equivalent to or different from the intended target
16 party, whereby the sending party may determine whether the
17 accessing party triggering the access event was in fact the
18 intended target party.

1 5. The method as in Claim 1,

1 wherein the discovering step includes electronically
2 tapping a remote connection between the second computer and
3 a remote user computer which is operable by the accessing
4 party to gain remote access to the recipient e-mail address
5 via the communications network, for obtaining remote access
6 information associated with the remote connection between
7 the second computer and the remote user computer.

1 6. The method as in Claim 1,

2 further comprising the step of:

3 transmitting and delivering to the recipient e-mail
4 address an executable attachment file in conjunction with
5 the e-mail file, the executable attachment file having a
6 first module for discovering the recipient data, a second
7 module for generating the confirmation of receipt notice,
8 and a third module for electronically transmitting the
9 confirmation of receipt notice, and

10 upon the detection of the designated access event,
11 automatically executing the first, second, and third modules
12 of the executable attachment file.

1 7. The method as in Claim 6,

2 wherein the executable attachment file has fourth and
3 fifth modules transmitted and delivered therewith, the
4 fourth module for detecting the designated access event, and

5 the fifth module for providing notice of the delivered e-
6 mail file to the accessing party, and

7 further comprising the steps of:

8 automatically executing the fourth module upon delivery
9 of the attachment file to the recipient e-mail address, and

10 upon the detection of the designated access event,
11 automatically executing the fifth module of the executable
12 attachment file.

1 8. The method as in Claim 1,
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3 further comprising the step of determining, upon
4 delivery of the e-mail file to the recipient e-mail address,
5 whether the delivered e-mail file is of at least one
6 designated file-type requiring a confirmation of receipt
7 notice, and

8 wherein the detecting step occurs upon a determination
9 that the delivered e-mail file is of the at least one
designated file-type.

1 9. A method of confirming proper receipt of e-mail, said method
2 comprising the steps of:

3 obtaining an e-mail file which is intended by a sending
4 party for transmission to a target e-mail address associated
5 with a target party;

6 electronically transmitting the e-mail file from a
7 first computer connected to a communications network and
8 associated with the sending party;

9 delivering the e-mail file to a recipient e-mail
10 address associated with a second computer connected to the
11 communications network;

12 detecting a designated access event triggered by an
13 accessing party and generally associated with e-mail
14 retrieval from the recipient e-mail address;

15 obtaining access event data of attendant conditions of
16 the designated access event upon a detection of the
17 designated access event;

18 upon obtaining the access event data, automatically
19 executing the steps of:

20 providing notice of the delivered e-mail file to
21 the accessing party,

22 generating a confirmation of receipt notice
23 containing the access event data, and

24 electronically transmitting the confirmation of
25 receipt notice from the second computer to a return e-
26 mail address associated with the sending party; and
27 comparing the access event data contained in the
28 confirmation of receipt notice with intended delivery
29 information associated with the target party, whereby the

30 sending party may determine whether the e-mail file was
31 properly delivered.

10. The method as in Claim 9,

wherein the step of obtaining the access event data includes interactively requesting and receiving input from the accessing party.

1 11. The method as in Claim 9,

2 further comprising the steps of: obtaining accessing
3 party identity information from the accessing party as a
4 requisite condition for permitting access to the recipient
5 e-mail address, and recording the accessing party identity
6 information to an accessing party data file for resident
7 storage in the second computer, and

8 wherein the step of obtaining access event data
9 includes retrieving the accessing party data file from the
10 second computer, and the step of comparing the access event
11 data includes determining whether the accessing party
12 identity information is equivalent to or different from the
13 intended target party, whereby the sending party may
14 determine whether the accessing party triggering the access
15 event was in fact the intended target party.

1 12. The method as in Claim 9,

2 further comprising the steps of: obtaining accessing
3 party identity information from the accessing party as a
4 requisite condition for operating a remote user computer,
5 said remote user computer connected to the second computer
6 via the communications network and operable by the accessing
7 party to gain remote access to the recipient e-mail address;
8 and recording the accessing party identity information to an
9 accessing party data file for resident storage in the remote
10 user computer, and

11 wherein the step of obtaining access event data
12 includes retrieving the accessing party data file from the
13 remote user computer, and the step of comparing the access
14 event data includes determining whether the accessing party
15 identity information is the same as or different from the
16 intended target party, whereby the sending party may
17 determine whether the accessing party triggering the access
18 event was in fact the intended target party.

1 13. The method as in Claim 9,

2 wherein the step of obtaining access event data
3 includes electronically tapping a remote connection between
4 the second computer and a remote user computer which is
5 operable by the accessing party to gain remote access to the
6 recipient e-mail address via the communications network, for
7 obtaining remote access information associated with the

8 remote connection between the second computer and the remote
9 user computer.

1 14. The method as in Claim 9,

2 further comprising the steps of:

3 transmitting and delivering to the recipient e-mail
4 address an executable attachment file in conjunction with
5 the e-mail file, the executable attachment file having a
6 first module for obtaining the access event data, a second
7 module for generating the confirmation of receipt notice,
8 and a third module for electronically transmitting the
9 confirmation of receipt notice, and

10 upon the detection of the designated access event,
11 automatically executing the first module for obtaining the
12 access event data, and

13 upon obtaining the access event data, automatically
14 executing the second and third modules of the executable
15 attachment file.

1 15. The method as in Claim 14,

2 wherein the executable attachment file has fourth and
3 fifth modules transmitted and delivered therewith, the
4 fourth module for detecting the designated access event, and
5 the fifth module for providing notice of the delivered e-
6 mail file to the accessing party, and

7 further comprising the steps of:

8 automatically executing the fourth module upon delivery
9 of the attachment file to the recipient e-mail address, and
10 upon obtaining the access event data, automatically
11 executing the fifth module of the executable attachment
12 file.

1 16. The method as in Claim 9,

2 further comprising the step of determining, upon
3 delivery of the e-mail file to the recipient e-mail address,
4 whether the delivered e-mail file is of at least one
5 designated file-type requiring a confirmation of receipt
6 notice, and

7 wherein the detecting step occurs upon a determination
8 that the delivered e-mail file is of the at least one
9 designated file-type.

1 17. A system for confirming proper receipt of e-mail transmitted
2 over a communications network, said system comprising:

3 an e-mail file which is intended by a sending party for
4 electronic transmission to a target e-mail address
5 associated with a target party;

6 a first computer connected to the communications
7 network and from which the sending party may electronically
8 transmit the e-mail file;

9 a second computer connected to the communications
10 network and associated with a recipient e-mail address, the
11 second computer having a data storage location for storablely
12 receiving the e-mail file thereon upon delivery to the
13 recipient e-mail address;

14 first executable software means for detecting a
15 designated access event which is triggered by an accessing
16 party and which is generally associated with e-mail
17 retrieval from the recipient e-mail address;

18 second executable software means for providing notice
19 of the delivered e-mail file to the accessing party;

20 third executable software means for discovering
21 recipient data associated with the recipient e-mail address;

22 fourth executable software means for generating a
23 confirmation of receipt notice containing the recipient
24 data; and

25 fifth executable software means for electronically
26 transmitting the confirmation of receipt notice from the
27 second computer to a return e-mail address associated with
28 the sending party,

29 wherein the second, third, fourth, and fifth executable
30 software means are configured for automatic execution upon
31 detection of the designated access event by the first
32 executable software means,

33 whereby a comparative examination of the confirmation
34 of receipt notice by the sending party permits the sending
35 party to determine whether the e-mail file was properly
36 delivered.

1 18. The system as in Claim 17,

2 further comprising a pre-recorded recipient data file
3 resident in the second computer and containing the recipient
4 data, and

5 wherein the third executable software means for
6 discovering operates to retrieve the pre-recorded recipient
7 data file from the second computer.

1 19. The system as in Claim 17,

2 further comprising a remote user computer which is
3 remotely connected to the second computer via the
4 communications network and from which the accessing party
5 may gain remote access to the recipient e-mail address, and

6 wherein the third executable software means operates to
7 discover remote access information associated with the
8 remote access of the recipient e-mail address from the
9 remote user computer.

1 20. The system as in Claim 19,

2 further comprising accessing party identifier means
3 resident on the second computer for obtaining accessing
4 party identification information from the accessing party as
5 a requisite condition for permitting access to the recipient
6 e-mail address, said accessing party identifier means
7 subsequently recording the accessing party identity
8 information to an accessing party data file for resident
9 storage in the second computer, and

10 wherein the third executable software means for
11 discovering recipient data operates to retrieve the
12 accessing party data file from the second computer.

1 21. The system as in Claim 19,

2 further comprising accessing party identifier means
3 resident on the remote user computer for obtaining accessing
4 party identification information from the accessing party as
5 a requisite condition for operating the remote user
6 computer, said accessing party identifier means subsequently
7 recording the accessing party identity information to an
8 accessing party data file for resident storage in the remote
9 user computer, and

10 wherein the third executable software means for
11 discovering recipient data operates to retrieve the
12 accessing party data file from the remote user computer.

1 22. The system as in Claim 19,

2 wherein the third executable software means for
3 discovering recipient data operates to electronically tap
4 the remote connection between the second computer and the
5 remote user computer, for obtaining remote access
6 information associated with the remote connection between
7 the second computer and the remote user computer.

1 23. The system as in Claim 17,

2 wherein the third, fourth, and fifth executable
3 software means are third, fourth, and fifth modules,
4 respectively, of an executable attachment file transmitted
5 and delivered in conjunction with the e-mail file.

1 24. The system as in Claim 23,

2 wherein the first and second executable software means
3 are first and second modules, respectively, of the
4 executable attachment file, with said first module
5 automatically executing upon delivery of the executable
6 attachment file to the recipient e-mail address.

1 25. The system as in Claim 17,

2 further comprising a sixth executable software means
3 for determining whether the delivered e-mail file is of at

4 least one designated field-type requiring a confirmation of
5 receipt notice, and

6 wherein the first executable software means is
7 automatically executed upon a determination that the
8 delivered e-mail file is of the at least one designated
9 file-type requiring a confirmation of receipt notice.